
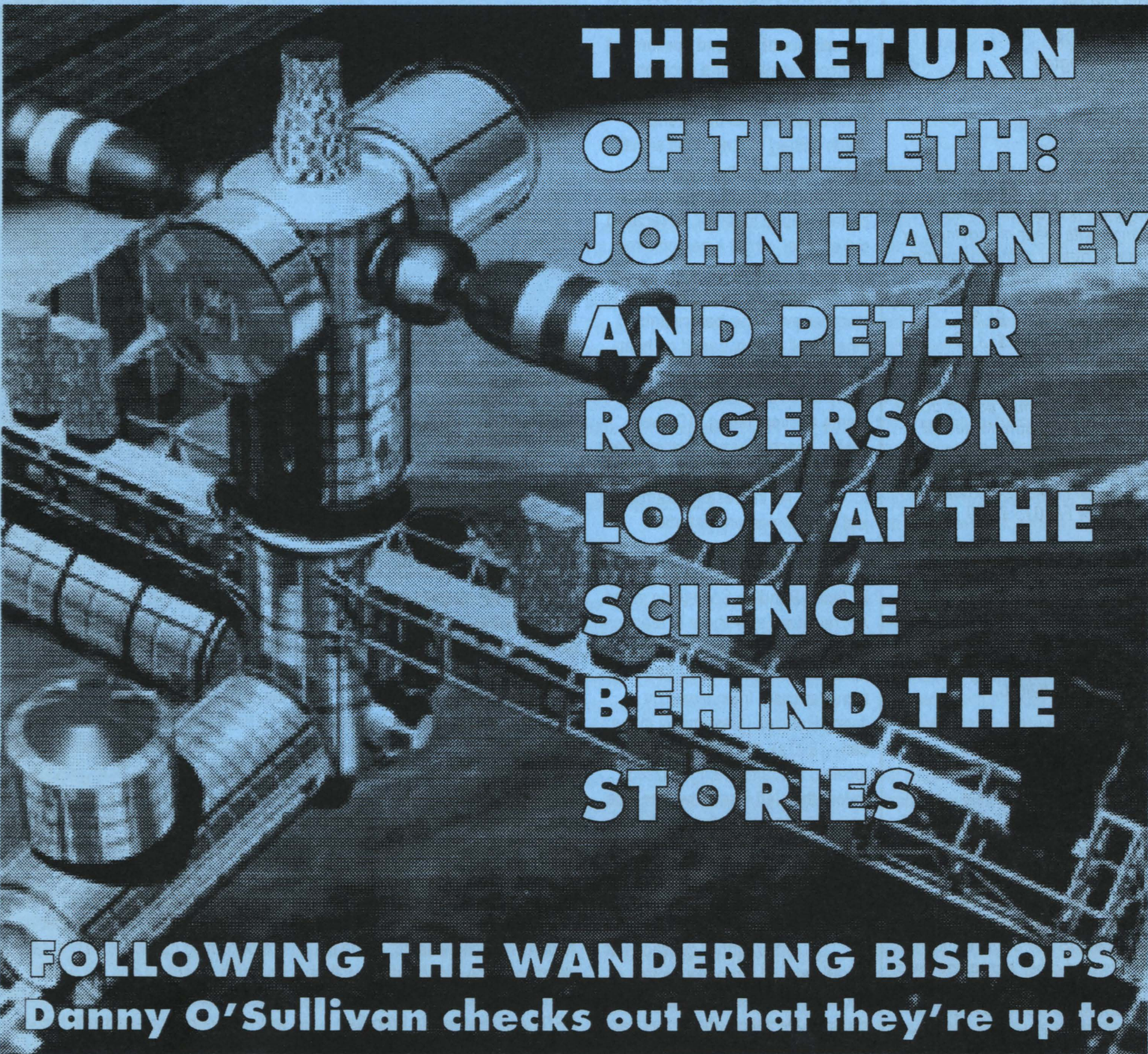


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INTERPRETING CONTEMPORARY VISION AND BELIEF

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THE RETURN OF THE ETH: JOHN HARNEY AND PETER ROGERSON LOOK AT THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE STORIES

FOLLOWING THE WANDERING BISHOPS
Danny O'Sullivan checks out what they're up to



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THERE HAS BEEN SOME scepticism expressed about the claim made by the United States Government in the report *Roswell, The Case Closed*, that people had misremembered incidents occurring in the 1950's as having happened at the time of Roswell. Surely memories cannot be *that* distorted, can they?

Historians who work with oral testimony, however are familiar with just this sort of problem, as one of them writes:

"Memories play tricks, as drastic pruning commences very soon after an experience, one person's selective processes operating very differently from another's, offering several perceptions of even the most mundane incidents. Memory is a mixture of fact and opinion, full of inconsistencies and excisions. Events may be reinterpreted over time, may relate to occurrences which [either] had no great significance for, or made a huge impression on, a child, several may be telescoped together, or recalled out of order, whilst a person's role in them might be enlarged by wishful re-enactment. Some may remember events as participants, other retell a story based on hearsay which has been recounted many times over with embellishments at every telling." (Colwell, Stella; *Teach Yourself Tracing Your Family Tree*, Hodder, 1997, p 11)

An interesting example of just such a memory distortion, compressing events which occurred over a decade apart can be found in Jenny Randles *Something in the Air*, reviewed elsewhere in *Magonia* by John Harney, concerning the famous 1954 Goose Bay Stratocruiser case. Interviewed by Jenny Randles (presumably in the early 1990's), the chief stewardess recalled that after being quizzed before they left Heathrow, she was later asked to go to the Air Ministry with Lee Boyd and James Howard. They asked her if she often saw things - whether she was psychic and if she had seen fairies.

After further questions at the Ministry all three were introduced to a Professor Black, a psychiatrist. He asked about their perception and eyesight, and specu-

PETER ROGERSON'S NORTHERN ECHOES

lated about optical illusions and light refractions. Then, quite remarkably the officials requested Daphne and the pilots to undergo hypnosis. Jenny goes on to say how remarkably early 1954 would be for hypnotic regression, and how all trace of this incident is gone from official files.

In fact the name Black is a vital clue here, for it allows us to identify the correct time in which these incidents occurred. The crew of the BOAC Stratocruiser did not meet 'Dr' Stephen Black (who may or may not have had a degree in psychology) in 1954 but in either 1967 or just possibly early 1968. And the meeting was not at the instigation of the Air Ministry, but that of the BBC, for the documentary *UFOs and the People Who See Them* broadcast on BBC 1 on May

9th 1968. A detailed review by John Harney appears in MUF0B volume 1, number 3, pp.23-5, and was the subject of an editorial by Charles Bowen in FSR 14, 4 pp.1-2. Both these reviews note the BOAC crews' appearance in the programme. This study by Stephen Black was indeed remarkably perceptive, anticipating much of the psychosocial ufology of the 1980's and 1990's. There is no doubt that the interview with Black that the chief stewardess recalls was for this programme (in which she appeared). The hypnosis was not exactly hypnotic regression, but was part of Black's testing of his theory that close encounter UFO witnesses were deep trance hypnotic subjects. He suggested that flickering light, the way people react in groups, and hypnosis could all combine to explain UFOs. Many of us would think he may have hit on something very important.

This case of memory distortion is very informative. Daphne the stewardess had correctly remembered the doctor's surname and his line of questioning, but had the time frame and context totally distorted. Another person may well have remembered to the day when the interview took place, could have told you what the weather was like, but could not have remembered anything of what was asked. This incident proves that time compression of over a decade is possible, and that there is nothing totally improbable about the USAF claims over Roswell.

How many other such cases of memory distortion are there in which groups of events thought to have occurred at roughly the same time occurred ages apart, and where context is misremembered? It reinforces the warning Stephen Smith (then BUFORA's director of research) gave at a conference a quarter of a century ago: there is little point in investigating cases much more than a week old, and that the aim should be no later than 48 hours. Today's ufologists are becoming obsessed with cases from half a century ago, for which original documentation is sparse, and memories confused with the passage of time.

SAUCERS AND SCIENCE

WHERE DID IT ALL GO WRONG?

There are several reasons why the scientific community refuses to treat UFO reports very seriously and a discussion of them could prove enlightening. JOHN HARNEY begins by asking the question: When reports of strange aerial phenomena first attracted wide public attention in the USA in 1947, why were the most detailed and best-witnessed of these reports not simply subjected to critical analysis in an attempt to explain them?

FROM A SCIENTIFIC perspective the answer is fairly clear. Even when reports came from sources generally considered reliable it was difficult to pass them on to the appropriate experts for analysis as it was difficult to decide who might be competent to assess them. If most reports are thought to be generated by delusions or misperceptions, then they should obviously be investigated by psychologists. If they are thought to be unconventional or foreign aircraft, then aviation and defence experts should be consulted.

In the USA in 1947 the reports of flying saucers that could not be explained as misinterpretations of aircraft, balloons or natural phenomena were thought by some to be secret aircraft being tested. Very few people believed that they were alien spacecraft. Some of the reports were undoubtedly generated by secret military experiments. In the Mantell case of 1948, the US Air Force was unable to identify the object that Mantell was chasing in his aircraft, so resorted to guesswork. It was eventually discovered that the object was almost certainly a large balloon carrying scientific instruments. The Skyhook balloon project was run by the Navy. As it was classified secret, they had not

told the Air Force.

In the early 1950s, serious attempts to investigate the UFO phenomenon were bedevilled by the activities of the contactees, such as George Adamski, Daniel Fry and Truman Bethurum. Few of those who presented themselves as serious researchers or writers on UFOs, such as Donald Keyhoe, took their stories seriously, but their activities tended to discourage scientists from taking an active interest in the subject.

The main difficulty seems to be that ufologists did not know exactly what they were supposed to be studying. A collection of UFO reports would require many different skills and different types of scientific expertise to explain them, including meteorology, astronomy, atmospheric optics, aviation technology and psychology. Scientists who did become involved either tried to explain all reports with reference to their special knowledge, or got hopelessly out of their depth because the phenomenon proved to be far more complex than they had imagined.

There were many sceptics among the scientists but, unfortunately, very few of them knew much about UFO reports and their

complexity. Those who tended to dismiss the reports as nonsense when questioned by the news media, had an irritating habit either of picking on cases that were easily explained or of ignoring inconvenient facts in discussing more difficult cases.

A further problem arose when ufologists began to evolve unconventional theories or models to explain particular UFO reports or UFOs in general. In America, some became emotionally committed to the contactee cult, whereas others, such as Keyhoe, with support from some senior Air Force officers, regarded them as probably being alien spacecraft. However, they refused to consider reports of UFOs landing and their crews being seen, in order to avoid being tarred with the contactee brush.

We can thus trace back the American predilection for preferring one kind of UFO to another, based on preconceived theory rather than evidence and testimony, to the activities of Keyhoe and Project Blue Book investigators.

Blue Book had Dr J. Allen Hynek as its scientific consultant for over 20 years. As an astronomer, he was easily able to explain reports generated by misinterpretations of stars, planets and meteors,

but not those generated by sightings of experimental aircraft or unusual atmospheric phenomena, or those generated by optical illusions and hallucinations, which often involved other persons present at these incidents by a process of hysterical contagion.

Hynek began as a sceptic but eventually became a believer, taking an occult approach to the subject. As a physical scientist, he tended to take reports at face value and thus tended to assign those he could not explain in physical terms to the realm of the paranormal. Another scientist, Dr Jacques Vallee, began by attempting scientific and statistical analyses of the UFO data, but gradually became more concerned with the bizarre and subjective aspects of the subject when he found that although some reports resisted easy explanations in physical terms, they did not seem to make sense when interpreted as visitors from other planets. This change in his approach led to the publication of *Passport to Magonia*, (1) which compared modern UFO reports with traditional fairy lore and demonology.

Nuts-and-bolts ufologists were even less pleased with the researches of John Keel when he published a detailed account of his investigations of the weird phenomena associated with UFO sightings. (2) His speculations were unscientific and incoherent, but his actual reports were the fruits of considerable field work. Those who attempted to follow up his investigations were horrified to find that they were told similar stories by UFO witnesses.

The result of all this was not that ufology split into supporters of the nuts-and-bolts extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH) and paranormals, but that readers of Vallee and Keel refused to take their writings at face value and used them to evolve the theory that ufology was a modern myth whose details could be attributed to various social and psychological causes. As Jerome Clark put it: "In *Passport to Magonia* the groundwork for the psychosocial hypothesis was laid." (3) The paranormals tended to

be marginalised in any attempts at serious discussion of the topic, being despised by ETHers and proponents of the psychosocial hypothesis (PSH) alike.

When stories of UFO abductions gradually became more prominent, a split appeared in the ranks of the ETHers. Those who were physical scientists tended to attribute these to psychological causes, in agreement with the PSHers, whereas others were inclined to take them at face value and gradually evolved the fantastic theory that the aliens were using humans in a programme to produce human-alien hybrids. The nuts-and-bolts ETHers, however, could not accept this because many of the claims of the abduction enthusiasts ignored the basic laws of physics and biology. They were not sceptical about the idea of UFOs crewed by aliens, though, and they were keen to discover any physical evidence to support the ETH.

The Roswell incident was a gift to the nuts-and-bolts people. Here was evidence that the saucers were physical devices which, like earthly aircraft and spacecraft, could sometimes go wrong and crash. As the Roswell obsession developed, at the same time the UFO abduction researchers were honing their theories. Perhaps the two most influential of them are Budd Hopkins and David Jacobs. Neither is a scientist; Hopkins is an artist and Jacobs is an historian. Both men came to the conclusion that abductions were taking place on a grand scale and they were merely irritated by more numerate ufologists who calculated that such operations were not a practical possibility, even if the saucers and their crews really existed. Physical scientists, together with others having a modicum of common sense, also took issue with the abductionists' assertions that the Greys could get into abductees' houses without opening doors or windows and without being seen by independent witnesses, or recorded by security cameras or other equipment. Hopkins and his friends wave all such objections aside. The Greys have the power of "selective invisibility"

which enables them to choose who will or will not see them. They also seem untroubled by the biological absurdity of the notion of human-alien hybrids. After all, is not this a familiar theme in many Star Trek episodes? If humans can mate with Vulcans and Romulans can mate with Klingons and produce offspring, why not humans and Greys? In the world of the abduction researcher there seems to be little distinction between science and science fiction.

One would have thought that the activities of Hopkins and company would draw nothing but contempt and derision from the world at large, but this does not seem to happen to the extent that one would expect. Here we come to one of the more serious aspects of the whole business - the credulity of many people who are sufficiently intelligent and well educated to know better. These people are easily taken in by the apparent sincerity of the abductees and the emotions they display when questioned by abduction researchers about their experiences.

Abduction researchers have managed to create a big impression by using the technique of hypnotic regression. They claim, contrary to the best evidence, that this, when used correctly, can reveal the truth about their subjects' past experiences. Untold harm has been done by the use of this technique by psychiatrists, and by persons with no formal qualifications, in producing stories of Satanic ritual abuse. Families have been broken up and persons sentenced to long prison terms because police, lawyers, judges and jurors have taken these fantastic tales at face value. This has happened in spite of the absurd details and the lack of any physical evidence to support them.

As the inevitable reaction set in against these injustices, many of the hypnotists have become involved in expensive lawsuits, as victims attempt to obtain compensation. UFO abduction hypnotists feel that they are on safer ground, though. The persons accused of wrongdoing are not parents or teachers, but the Greys who remain safely out of reach of

the law. However, many alleged abductees have complained that, although they have had strange experiences and perhaps have seen UFOs, they do not really believe that they have been abducted. It is surely only a matter of time before one of them sues an abduction enthusiast. The results could be interesting.

Meanwhile, the abduction obsession makes the study of unusual aerial phenomena extremely unattractive to physical scientists and gifted amateur investigators. But this is not the only reason why few scientists get involved with ufology. Most scientific research is carried out because governments and private companies provide the necessary funds to pay for it. Ufology must be a spare-time pursuit and available resources are very limited. Well-witnessed, detailed reports for which fairly obvious explanations are not apparent, occur rarely and unpredictably. Some reports, which at first seem promisingly mysterious, attract media attention and the waters become so muddled by liars and fantasists who want to get in on the act that it becomes almost impossible to establish the truth about the alleged incident. A good example of this is the Varginha case of January 1996.

The principal barrier to the objective investigation of UFO reports is the ETH. The ETH can be stated in a beguilingly simple and seemingly reasonable form by saying that there are a very few unexplained reports for which this would seem to be an explanation worth considering. Few ufologists are aware of the temptation and the trap. If you think that the ETH might - just might - be true, then there comes a point in your investigation in which you stop working on a case and say that you have considered every possibility and that the ETH is the only one left. Therefore further investigation would be a waste of time.

Fellow ufologists are very impressed; you are congratulated on your hard work and are favourably compared with carping critics superglued to armchairs. Then what happens? You and your

fellow ETHers build up a collection of inexplicable reports which should eventually accumulate so that a disbelieving world will finally be convinced that the ETs are here. Then along come the dreaded Sceptics and the Debunkers. They want to investigate your investigations to see if they are as meticulous and objective as you say they are. They look for hidden agendas and the concealment and distortion of negative evidence. Some of them even get out of their arm-chairs and cause you no end of trouble.

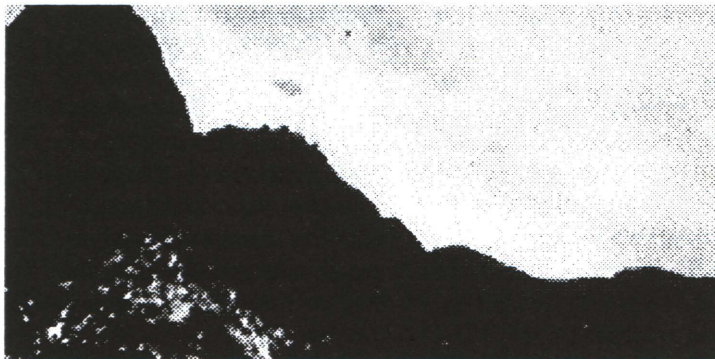
As the ETH is taken most seriously in the USA, this is where it has developed in its most extravagant form. As ufologists have no convincing proof of the ETH after more than 50 years, then there must be reasons for this situation. One of the favourite explanations is that the evidence is systematically concealed by government agencies. This notion has inspired numerous books, some of them written by people who are manifestly insane. These do nothing to entice the scientific community to take the UFO phenomenon seriously.

The belief that physical proof of extraterrestrial spaceships is kept secret is hopelessly irrational. Most ETHers cannot see this, so it is necessary, even if boring to some, to say why this is so and to keep on saying it as loudly and clearly as possible.

It is certainly true that governments and their agencies can keep secrets. But what many fail to realise is that these secrets concern matters controlled by governments. For example, if it is decided to construct and test a new type of weapon, then the government department responsible for it can decide where it is to be constructed and tested, and who shall have access to information about it. No persons will be informed about any aspect of the project unless they need to know. If defence journalists suspect that something unusual is going on, there will be cover stories ready for them to lead them away from the truth.

However, those who believe in government cover-ups of UFO evidence never seem willing

*Unfortunately journalists
who boarded the ship to
interview the crew were
unable to obtain statements
from any of them
confirming that they had
actually seen the UFO*



to say how any government could preserve secrecy about something over which it has absolutely no control. UFOs can appear anywhere, at any time. Yet, against all logic, many ufologists still believe that an alien spacecraft crashed near Roswell in 1947 and that it and its occupants are still kept, under heavy guard, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Less credulous ufologists have pointed out repeatedly that, although the crash of a secret prototype of a US Air Force plane could be hushed up almost indefinitely, it would be extremely dangerous to attempt to do this in the case of the crash of an alien spacecraft. What would happen if the crash were followed by a similar incident in another country? And

what if this incident were witnessed by thousands? Is it likely that the saucers are so designed that, in the event of mechanical failure they are programmed to crash within easy reach of US Air Force recovery teams?

The Roswell enthusiasts are unwilling to address themselves to such awkward questions. They either ignore them or attempt to preserve the myth by devising ingenious, paranoid fantasies. One of these is the story that the aliens are in league with the US government and that there is mutual co-operation in the effort to conceal their activities from the public. Another is that the US Air Force is so efficient and powerful that it can retrieve crashed UFOs quickly from any part of the world and persuade

various governments to assist it in preserving secrecy by means of censorship and disinformation.

The problem with this sort of nonsense is that it distracts attention from the UFO reports themselves. Paranoid conspiracy theories get us nowhere, whereas the PSH if used fairly and carefully can enable us to take account of the effects of psychological factors and popular culture on the reporting and investigation of mysterious aerial phenomena. Those reports which still remain mysterious after these factors have been taken into account are the ones most worthy of further investigation.

On the other hand, ETH proponents are not interested in puzzling reports, they are interested only in those which seem to them to point to the ETH as a possible explanation. They do not want to see such cases highlighted and subjected to intensive critical examination because a convincing explanation of one might be capable of being applied to most of the others, leaving them with no evidence to support their hypothesis.

For example, ETHers rightly lay great stress on reports involving multiple independent witnesses but there are in fact very few of these. In a number of cases allegedly involving multiple witnesses the careful reader will notice that the story is told to investigators by only one or two witnesses and that investigators mysteriously fail to interview any of the others. A notorious example of this is the Trinidad Isle sighting of 16 January 1958, when photographs were taken from the deck of a Brazilian navy vessel. Sceptics pointed out that the photographer was known for his trick photographs and said they were obvious fakes. Believers insisted, and still insist, that up to 100 witnesses saw the UFO. Unfortunately, journalists and others who boarded the ship to interview crew members were apparently unable to obtain statements from any of them confirming that they had actually seen the UFO. ETHers are sure there are such statements but somehow don't seem able to locate them, or that no one has yet got around to translating them into Eng-

lish, or whatever. However, they feel sure that there must have been all these witnesses, because that's what Coral Lorenzen said in her book, *Flying Saucers: The Startling Evidence of the Invasion from Outer Space*. (4)

It is understandable that ETHers should complain about sceptics who insist, *a priori*, that the ETH is nonsense and suppress and distort evidence in order to come up with conventional explanations for UFO reports, but they also resent open-minded researchers who actually dare to apply scientific and technical knowledge to their investigations. Such an approach, practised by Allan Hendry and reported in *The UFO Handbook*, (5) resulted in conventional solutions to all but a few of the cases he was able to investigate. Inevitably, some of the most puzzling cases had only one witness each, so not much weight could be given to them.

Although some of the more intellectually honest ETHers have praised Hendry's work, many of them hate his guts for whittling away at the evidence so that there are very few reports which cannot be explained by competent investigators. Hendry also managed to conduct his investigations without the usual paranoid rantings about government agencies concealing evidence, silencing witnesses and giving false information to news media. He just investigated the cases, without any tantrums or histrionics. Most ufologists who are fairly new to the subject have probably never heard of Hendry. This is because his objective approach is not likely to excite the crowds of believers who attend UFO conferences.

This brings us to another reason why scientists despise ufologists - ufology as show business. There have been notorious examples of this in recent years, some of them spin-offs from the Roswell circus, such as the Santilli "alien autopsy" film. And then there's the long-running MJ-12 saga, which might be called the thinking man's UFO entertainment.

Alien abduction was a favourite theme of science fiction films long before it became an ob-

session of certain ufologists. As a result of this, many producers of radio or television entertainment seem to see abductees as fair game. Recently, Jenny Randles was phoned by a TV company in London, asking her for the phone numbers of "robust witnesses who could stand up to being grilled in a fun way". She told the caller that "... abductions were a serious issue that needed proper assessment not the kind of farcical, fluffy chat show intended." (6)

Randles is certainly correct in her attitude. Holding up abductees to ridicule is no more likely to throw any light on the matter than the touting of absurd theories about selectively invisible aliens gliding through bedroom walls.

What is needed to entice physical scientists to take an interest in the study of UFO reports is a supply of genuinely puzzling cases, with multiple witnesses. These would also attract qualified psychologists, who could give advice about the limitations of human perception and memory and how these should be taken into account in the evaluation of sightings.

One somewhat neglected source of interesting UFO reports is the Hudson Valley area, to the north of New York City. A new edition of a book on these sightings has recently been published. (7) It summarises a collection of over 7,000 reports from the area covering the period from 1982 to 1995. After sightings of stars, planets and aircraft had been weeded out, there were many multi-witness reports of large flying objects with coloured lights, seen at low altitudes. The authors say that, because of the large number of reports, they lacked the resources to investigate more than a small proportion of them. However, as the reports are so numerous and the mysterious objects were continuing to be observed in recent years, there is plenty of material to work on for anyone who is keen to devise a sensible theory to account for them. It is possible, of course, that the Hudson Valley sightings can be explained without recourse to speculation about alien spacecraft or unknown natural phenomena, but only

careful, scientifically informed and unbiased investigation can uncover the truth. Perhaps some resources could be diverted from Roswell, MJ-12 and all that nonsense?

Finally, what is to be done? Is ufology to continue as a form of popular entertainment, or is it possible to investigate and present cases in such a way that professional physicists and psychologists will be prepared to take them seriously? There are some hopeful signs. Three British glossy, newsstand UFO magazines, *Alien Encounters*, *Sightings* and *UFO Reality*, have recently gone down the plughole, a fate they truly deserved for their general fatuity, empty-headed speculations and paranoid conspiracy-mongering. It was also pleasing to note that when the recent Sturrock Report was published, it was not only Philip Klass who noticed that the ufologists who presented UFO evidence to the panel of experts suppressed any negative findings or negative evidence about the cases they submitted. We now know not to trust these characters in future. In Britain, some influential ufologists are no longer prepared to tolerate the practice of unscrupulous people who allow unqualified persons to hypnotise alleged abductees, and they are making plans to do something about it.

The best way ahead is undoubtedly to develop the psychosocial hypothesis, but it must be applied with care. There is much that remains to be discovered about human perception and memory, and the workings of the brain. There is also much remaining to be discovered about natural phenomena which are rare or difficult to observe and record. PSHers must be careful not to discard evidence that does not seem to suit their preconceptions. There is little to be said for the ETH, though. While seeming superficially reasonable, it leads researchers inevitably to distort the evidence to accommodate it and frustration at its failure to deliver convincing proof leads to the unedifying paranoid fantasies and cover-up conspiracy theories that we have been subjected to for so many years.

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IS THE ETH A SCIENTIFIC HYPOTHESIS?

For many ufologists, particularly in the United States, the ETH is still the prime explanation for as-yet-unexplained UFO reports.

Peter Rogerson analyses the ETH as a scientific hypothesis rather than an article of personal faith.

THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE disagreements among philosophers and scientists as to exactly what constitutes a scientific hypothesis, but the general consensus is that scientific hypotheses should yield specific, testable, predictions; thus if hypothesis A is correct we would expect an experiment to yield, or to observe in nature B, C and D, if however the experiment yields, or we observe in nature X, Y or Z, then the hypothesis is unlikely to be true. In other words the hypothesis should lead to specific conclusions, the universe, or some aspect of it should be an observably different place if the hypothesis is true, than if it is false.

A well known example of a hypothesis which is not a scientific hypothesis, because it leads to no testable conclusions, is the one invented by the Victorian geologist Philip Gosse, who sought to reconcile the growing evidence for the great age of the earth, with his per-

sonal belief in the Biblical account of the creation of the world in 4,004 BC. His answer was to argue that the prior history of the earth existed as an idea in the mind of God (as virtual reality, as we would say today). The world went through cycles of development, and at some point in 4,004 BC this virtual world was manifested by God, complete with the record of its previous virtual history, such as fossils in the ground, and Adam and Eve's navels (and presumably their *memories* of non-existent parents). Clearly such a hypothesis leads to no different conclusions that one in which the world *really* existed for vast ages.

Also scientific hypotheses should lead to further questions, they should not end with question stopping answers such as "that is the way God wills it, it is not for us to question why", or because boggarts cause it. (Why does sodium when placed in water fizz and

spit—because the boggarts make it so). In other words they should not invoke supernatural forces, or arbitrary wills, whether that of God, or lesser supernaturals such as angels or devils. That explains everything, and therefore nothing.

It is here that the ETH in its most general form clearly falls, in the absence of any independent knowledge as to the nature and capabilities of ETs, Ufologists feel free to invest them with any properties they choose, often self-contradictory ones. If it suits the case for the ET's to come in fallible machines which repeatedly crash in the New Mexico desert, then they will ascribe that property to them; if it suits to grant them near-omnipotent supernatural powers, for example enchanting whole cities while abducting people through solid walls into invisible space ships, they will gladly do so. If the UFOs behave like conventional machines, then the evidence of exotic ma-

chines proves the ETH; if they behave like something else entirely then this also proves the ETH, because, of course no-one is naive enough to believe that they could come here by any kind of machine or process which we are familiar. It is clear that wherever the evidence leads, proponents of the ETH will find confirmation for their belief in ETs. Not surprisingly, Jerome Clark, for example, has never responded to my challenge as to how he would go about refuting the ETH. The only way that could be definitively done, would be to search every planet in every solar system in the entire universe for signs of life, and even then if none were detected proponents of the ETH would say that was because the ET's had camouflaged themselves so well, or because they were the wrong vibrational level for our instruments.

This does not mean that no version of the ETH can ever be a scientific hypothesis; however unlikely. The hypothesis that UFOs are fusion-powered spaceships from Mars is a scientific hypothesis. We could work out in advance what the properties of fusion-powered spaceships are likely to be, and compare them with unexplained UFO reports (there is a problem there we will come to later), and eventually go to Mars to look. In other words the hypothesis stands a chance of leading to specific conclusions, and one can devise a finite, once and for all, test.

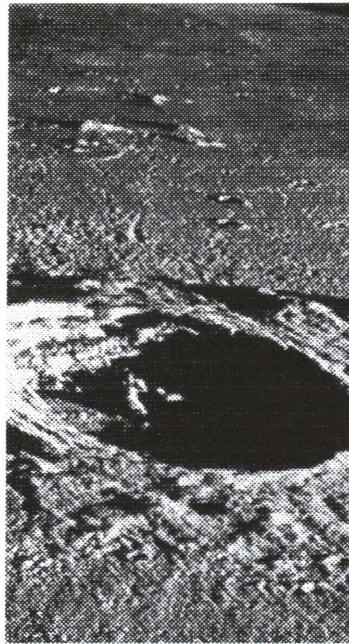
How general can the ETH be made and still be a scientific hypothesis? At the very least we have to limit the ET's, however advanced their technology, to the currently understood laws of physics, and I think we have to make the assumption that the ET's are in very general sense, somewhat like us. They have manipulative organs, and the equivalent of a complex, highly developed form of consciousness. Make these two assumptions, in order to make the ETH at least somewhat manageable, and something interesting happens. It does not predict UFOs, it predicts that it is more likely than not that if ET craft carry biological beings, they will be very, very big

indeed, but if they are mechanised they are more likely than not to be very, very small indeed.

How can make such a prediction? Note that I said we have to say that the ET's are roughly like human beings and that statements made about human interstellar flight apply to them also, and that we denied them any mysterious Z process. This means they can't go faster than light, so all journeys take a very long time. This means that whatever means you use, explicitly or implicitly you are sending your astronauts into permanent exile.

There are three main methods suggested by which human beings might reach the stars. The first is the space Ark, this travels at moderate speeds, but takes huge amounts of time to reach its destinations. Generations pass on the ship before star-fall, there is no return. This is a route for permanent colonies only. The Ark therefore has to be huge. Remember this is not just a colony which must sustain itself for ten or so generations of travel, but must establish a long term breeding programme at their destination. A minimum population to establish a wide enough genetic mix, to guard against future disease, population crash, etc, is probably in the region of 10,000 people. Some other points must be borne in mind. These people would have to be given space, a colony divided into separate villages seems more sustainable than some giant apartment block. They would have to take a sustainable biosphere; we simply do not know how bound up with the general biosphere human beings are, how simple things like the climate, the seasons, the alternation of night and day, the tides, etc., affect us. Remove us from the earth for long periods of time, and viability cannot be guaranteed. It seems a whole artificially biosphere would need to be created. We are thinking of ships many kilometres long.

In any case it is not at all clear that such a voyage could ever succeed. For a start could any sane human society ever permit any group of people to make a totally irredeemable choice on behalf of



No human society ever before would have gone into such a permanent exile, with not even the wildest, fondest, dreams of return

unborn generations to come? Even if the voyage got under way the psychological problems seem overwhelming. No human society ever before would have gone into such a permanent exile, with not even the wildest, fondest dream of return. No human society before would become so enclosed, locked in with themselves, unable to escape. What sort of people might be initially attracted to the ideas of being pioneers among the stars? The restless, the adventurous, the derring do, precisely the sort of people who would eventually find being cooped up into the space Ark, even one a couple of hundred kilometres in diameter, unsustainable. Their world might become enclosed on itself, abandon its original project, or, I suspect, collapse in personal and factional feuds.

If the space Ark is not a very pleasant prospect, then what of the two touted alternatives: some kind of artificial hibernation, or very very fast relativistic voyages, taking advantage of the time dilation effect? Though it may seem these offer the chance of voyage and return within the lifetime of the crew, in reality these too offer a subtler form of irrevocable exile, the world to which they return if they choose to return, will be one transformed beyond recognition, all friends, family, familiar landscape, gone, all social mores changed, the language transformed. Returnees would indeed be strangers in a strange land. If ETs have the sort of complex level of consciousness needed to build spaceships, then, because it seems that consciousness has at least in part evolved as a means of dealing with social interaction, the ETs will be as embedded in their society as we are in ours, capable of feeling their equivalent of pain, loss, loneliness and bereavement. This means that whether there is a planned return or not, a small crew is out, you would have to send a social support network, capable of sustaining the voyage and creating a society within a society on return.

Given the vast changes on return, why return? The relativistic or cryogenic spaceships are likely also to colony ships, with vast

crews and no plans for return. It should be borne in mind that even relativistic spaceships will take crew-time voyages of several years: it takes time to accelerate and decelerate. Furthermore, very, very, very fast voyages are probably not possible. This is because the discussions on ultra fast flight say 99.99% of the velocity of light, are based on idealised models in which interstellar space is an absolute vacuum, but this is not the case; there is gas, fine dust and no doubt small lumps of rock out there. Of course the density from the viewpoint of a static observer is very low, but from the point of view of traveller close to the velocity of light, the distances ahead are increasingly foreshortened; the faster the ship, the greater the density of the interstellar matter, and, from the ships point of view, the greater the mass of its components. At these high speeds, impact with something the size of a grain of sand, would breach the hull, anything the size of a pea, blow it to smithereens. Not only that, the foreshortening of the incoming space, means the wavelength of incoming light will increasingly be shortened. As the ship gets ever closer to C, the incoming light will blue shift into the ultraviolet, then into hard X-rays. The crew will fry. What relativity gives with one hand, it takes with the other. This leaves out the stupendous energies which would be required to accelerate the ship to velocities close to C, as the ships mass (from the viewpoint of an external observer) is ever increasing.

All of this suggests that neither slow nor very fast spaceships are a practical proposition, if human beings are to go to the stars, it will be in fast (say 25 per cent to 75 per cent of C) but not ultra fast, very big ships, with founding populations in the many thousands. If ET's are anything like us at all, it is more likely than not they are coming in something very big indeed. If UFO reports are generated by biological ETs they *must* have a very big base somewhere in our solar system. No-one has detected one so far, nor do we see daily spaceships visiting us.

If however, we go for

unmanned probes, then the priority is speed, in order that we can get the information from the probe in as short a time as possible. The route is as obvious as possible. An unmanned interstellar probe should be as cheap, and small and fast as technology will permit. Indeed the major limit here may be finding a way of decelerating the probe at the other end, though use of friction with interstellar dust might work. Launching would be using some process which does not use on board fuel, firing from laser cannons, or using some vast linear accelerator (on the Moon perhaps). How small these probes can get will depend on advances in computer technology, but my guess is that they could get pretty small. Once that path is taken both the costs and risks will be some many orders of magnitude less than manned voyages that the manned voyage route will never be taken. If ET's are anything like us, it is not likely they will send biological beings on interstellar voyages.

The problem with the ETH is now clear. The ideas underlying much of the speculation surrounding it are already old fashioned by our own science. The ETH was formulated in days when spaceships, (always thought to come from Mars) were seen as kinds of ultra high performance aircraft, before ultra high resolution satellite surveillance, before the computer revolution, before miniaturisation. If real ET's were visiting us, we would probably never notice.

It may be argued that that all of this is very anthropomorphic, that real ETs may be very different from us, that they come here using processes which we cannot understand. There could be a lot of truth in that, but supporters of the ETH must understand that the moment they invoke unguessable psychologies and exotic technologies about which we know, and can therefore say nothing, they are abstracting the ETH from the realms of science, into those of metaphysics and personal faith.

There is another difficulty which would face proponents of an ETH even if they could state in advance what the properties of the ET

craft were, so as to compare them with UFO reports; this is that there is no agreed upon, uncontaminated data base of UFO reports. Indeed as the definition of UFO is essentially a negative one, those reports as of today not yet identified, there can be no guarantee that the reports will not be explained tomorrow, (remember Peter Day's film) There are no UFO reports which are wholly different from all IFO reports. There is furthermore no reason to suppose that even if (as might well be the case) that there are UFO reports generated by novel phenomena, they all have the same cause. As I found out while compiling the notorious INTCAT, there are few cases which everyone agrees on. There would also be the problem of determining whether an equal or better fit might not be made with some other phenomenon in the future.

As I have noted several times before, there is an even bigger problem with the ETH. Its central proposition may be just too anthropomorphic; the belief that there are ETs who are in essence people of another shape, perhaps looking different from us, but who are engaged in essentially the same projects. The occupants reported as being connected with UFOs are just too human, and there is a large measure of agreement among evolutionary biologists that there is little chance of human beings evolving elsewhere. Indeed if human beings were wiped out tomorrow, there is almost no chance of them evolving on earth again. At this point there is a tendency among some Ufologists to cry parallel evolution; what these people forget is that parallel evolution is something which occurs when creatures having different immediate ancestors, (but like all terrestrial organisms sharing a good deal of common DNA coding), adapt to very similar ecological niches.

This has not happened in the case of upright walking, tool users. There are no marsupial people, there are no New World people, there aren't any people descended from the orang-utans. The best parallel evolution might come up with is some ET equivalent of a

nondescript little furry animal. Unless one makes the assumption that the presumed ET world has ecological niches virtually identical to our own, even that might be asking too much. As most women who have given birth, and as anyone who suffers from back problems will tell you, the human body is not particularly well adapted. Large-headed upright walkers are not likely to be widespread. And as for the Mekon-like entities so often reported, they are even less likely. How to they give birth? How could a small heart in a small body supply enough oxygen to such a large brain.

Could creatures physically very different from us be sufficiently mentally similar to us to build radio telescopes and space ships? It has to be remembered we are not just talking about creatures which are anatomically different from us, such as elephants and pangolins, but physiologically and possibly even biochemically different. It is by no means clear that they would be composed of DNA, as opposed to some other complex reproducing molecule, which had evolved in the specific circumstances of their primal ooze. These would be entities who genetically would be far more different from us than yeast is. When, as I noted a few issues back, we realise than a very tiny genetic mutation in our own species can produce a major transformation of consciousness, it seems very improbable.

Perhaps this would be the next Copernican revolution, not to see ourselves as being of such cosmic importance that the universe would be somehow bereft if not filled with us or our surrogates, but to accept ourselves as one unique species among many, on one unique biosphere, in a universe of unique biospheres and unique entities. (We don't seem to have any problem in facing up to the fact that we are not likely to live in a universe filled with armadillos and kangaroos). That our ability to build radio telescopes would be no more or less surprising that the unique nature of any other unique species abilities.

We also have to realise

that the idea of building radio telescopes and space ships is not just unique to our species, among all the hundreds of millions which live or have lived on earth, it is unique to ours alone among many thousands of human cultures past and present. ET's wouldn't just have to think like humans, they would have to think like twentieth century Euro-Americans. The ET/CETI proponents don't just regard all other species as being somehow irrelevant, all other human cultures and human achievements are tossed aside as being of no importance.

As evolutionary history shows that the coming of human beings was not an inevitability, so history shows that the coming of heavy industry was by no means inevitable. The merger of science and technology appears to have been the result of something specific about western European culture, possibly a merging of Greek notions of rationalism, with Irano-Judaic notions of the linearity of history, the existence of a common culture and *lingua franca* (Latin) in the absence of a centralised political authority, as well as notions of individuality, the relative lack of affluence and comfort in the ruling class, amongst other factors. One can say with some confidence that many of the other cultures depicted in Star Trek, say, as having space travel, in reality would be most unlikely to develop technoscientific heavy industry.

Of course proponents of the ETH can argue against all of these points, and I would be the first to agree that in our state of such profound ignorance (we don't even know that there are any extra-terrestrial life forms) there can be no certainties. But it is precisely for that reason that the ETH, while by no means wholly irrational to hold as an article of personal faith, is not and cannot be a useful scientific working hypothesis.

The ETH debate is joined monthly in John Hamey's *Magonia ETH Bulletin*, which is available on the *Magonia* website at www.magonia.demon.co.uk.

BISHOPS ON THE LOOSE

Danny O'Sullivan

investigates the strange world
of the Wandering Bishops

In September this year there was a mild flurry of interest in the national media when Sister Frances Meigh, a 67 year-old mother of three who was recognised as a hermit by the Roman Catholic Church in Middlesbrough, was ordained a priest by Bishop Pat Buckley in Co Louth, Ireland, so becoming the "first woman priest" in Ireland.

THE ORDINATION WAS not, of course, recognised by the Church as Pat Buckley is a renegade cleric who has been in dispute with the Roman Catholic hierarchy for a decade. Though it admits he was properly ordained as a priest, the Church does not recognise his consecration as bishop, on the grounds that he was raised to the episcopate by another "rebel" bishop, and considers Buckley to be outside the communion of the Church.

Pat Buckley is now head of the Society of Saint Andrew, based in a former Anglican church in Omeath, Co Louth. A Catholic spokesman from the Middlesbrough diocese expressed concern that the erstwhile anchorite was "taking an enormous step into the unknown with a strange organisation", but Mother Frances (as she is now known) will apparently be followed by the "first married priest" in Ireland in short order - Bishop Buckley is intent, it would seem, on creating a liberal alternative to the established Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. That he feels he is able to do so is due to the theory of epis-

copacy historically endorsed by the Western Church (generally meaning Catholic, but the Anglican church subscribes to the same tradition), which in the last century or so has led to a curious legacy of sects led by so-called *episcopi vagantes* - 'wandering bishops', or 'bishops irregular' as they are sometimes called. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1958 edition, edited by F L Cross) gives a succinct definition of *episcopi vagantes*: "The name given to persons who have been consecrated bishop in an irregular or clandestine manner or who, having been regularly consecrated, have been excommunicated by the Church that consecrated them and are in communion with no recognised see. A man is also included in this group when the number in communion with him is so small that his sect appears to exist solely for his own sake."

The concept of 'validity' is all-important to the self-legitimation of these sects. Following St Augustine, Western theologians have held that due to the sacramental nature of ordination or

consecration, a bishop once made cannot be unmade. Thus though branded a heretic and excommunicated, or otherwise cut off from the authority of a Church, a bishop does not lose the 'powers' of his episcopacy, one of which is the consecration of other bishops, another being the ordination of priests. Any such orders dispensed by the bishop are held to be 'valid' but unlawful, or irregular and therefore not recognised by the Church in question. What is the point of such a distinction? It is hard to see, but one practical result of the theology is that an Orthodox priest converting to Catholicism would not have to be re-ordained - his ordination at the hands of Orthodox bishops would be held to be valid though unlawful (dispensed as it was by a body in schism with the Vatican) but submission to the Roman Catholic authorities would 'regularise' his status in the eyes of that Church. So a somewhat dubious notion of authenticity clings to clerics created by "rebel" bishops who have strayed outside the established systems of the Church, and in time a schismatic bishop

could create a whole succession of bishops, all 'validly' ordained and all holding themselves the power of 'valid' ordination despite the fact that no established Church would recognise them.

Bishop Pat Buckley is one such, and while Catholic commentators as doctrinaire as Mary Kenny admit that while 'misguided', he is essentially a 'good' man, other bishops irregular have been involved in fraud, fascism and organised paedophilia. While not wishing to list occultism alongside the latter vices, it also must be noted that many of the bishops irregular are conspicuous, as supposedly Christian clergy, for their interest in Theosophy, Gnosticism and various associated belief systems.

In February 1997 the *News of the World*, under the headline "MOST EVIL CHURCH ON EARTH", exposed a body called the Old Catholic Church as a "sham religious order" after an investigation revealed that its acting leader, John Simmons, and several of his co-clerics, were involved in paedophilia and child pornography. The group's titular leader, Monsignor Frederick Linale, was already serving a ten-year sentence for child sex offences. At the time a certain Father Stephen (not his real name) was running an 'Old Catholic Mission' in Rochester, Kent. The mission was actually a private house, and his secretary was screening telephone calls to see why people wanted to speak to the priest. "It's just that since all this business in the papers, Father Stephen has had lots of people ringing him up to ask if we're the same Old Catholic Church, so he's put together a whole load of information proving we've got nothing to do with those people." However, both Father Stephen's group and Linale's group shared a common heritage, both tracing their succession from the original Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain, which is one of the major roots for "bishops irregular" in this country.

The Old Catholic Church in Holland is seen as a perfectly legitimate institution, to the extent that it is recognised as a sister

Church by the Anglican communion, including the Church of England. It has its own church buildings and a large number of adherents, being created in the late seventeenth century when a significant proportion of Dutch Catholic clergy, including many bishops, fell out with the Pope and were excommunicated. Their numbers were added to in the late nineteenth century when another generation of Dutch Catholics found the assertion of "papal infallibility" as doctrine too much to stomach.

In 1908 the Dutch Old Catholic bishops ordained an ex-Roman Catholic priest called A H Mathew as the first Old Roman Catholic bishop of Great Britain, believing that there was a significant number of Catholics in England who would be happy to follow their lead in keeping their basic beliefs and ritual but dispensing with the Pope. In this, the Dutch bishops had been deceived. They were also unaware that Mathew was married, which would have invalidated the consecration in their eyes.

Mathew returned to England to find that there was little support for his movement and in time he became disillusioned. After first splitting from his Dutch superiors, he repudiated his Old Catholic movement and returned to the Roman Catholic Church as a layman in 1915. One of the reasons Mathew tried to disband his movement was that he had discovered that most of its members were involved in the contemporary craze for occultism - specifically, they were Theosophists. But the die had already been cast - Mathew had ordained, on his authority as a bishop, several other priests and a bishop who were not willing to give up their perceived status. What happened next is characteristic of many of the subsequent movements of bishops irregular in their stretching of the concept of "valid succession".

Proceeding in a rather *ad hoc* fashion, Mathew's remaining priests elected two of their number as bishops and had them consecrated by F S Willoughby, who Mathew had created 'Bishop of St Pancras' before deposing him for

his occult connections. Theosophy at the time was fashionable even among the clergy of the well-established Churches in England. In 1911, Theosophical luminary Annie Besant wrote: "Theosophy is spreading much among the clergy of the English Church and the ministers of the Nonconformist communities. Not only have we members of the Theosophical Society among the clergy, but there is an increasing number who welcome sermons on Theosophical teachings, and many more who themselves teach a mysticism indistinguishable from Theosophy."

The Old Catholic movement was seen by many occultists as a back door into an old-established mystical tradition - Christianity - which they hoped to influence gradually into convergence with their own 'flowering of divine consciousness', for the greater good of the whole world. Jesus was, for them, one of a succession of mystical masters who are incarnated on earth to raise humanity towards the highest possible spiritual state. In denying the uniqueness of Jesus, such a worldview differs radically from Christianity. By 1918 the Old Roman Catholic Church in Britain was almost completely Theosophical. Its 'presiding bishop', or leader, was James Ingall Wedgwood, by all accounts a remarkable personality. He changed the name of the movement to the Liberal Catholic Church and his energy and enthusiasm ensured that it spread throughout the world, counting several thousand among its membership even today. Liberal Catholic clergy do not wear black - it is considered a negative colour and much of their ritual centres around the magical properties of colours and substances.

A keen exponent of such ideas was Bishop Charles Leadbeater, Wedgwood's successor as presiding bishop, whose book *The Science of the Sacraments* sees the Christian sacraments as a form of 'high magic'. There is no doubt that Leadbeater was considered a clairvoyant of unusual power and likewise there is no doubt that he had been suspended from the

Theosophical Society in 1906 for sexual perversion involving young boys. One written source maintains: "The 'high spot' of Leadbeater's teaching to young men was reached during collective masturbation, whereby at the point of climax, all were exhorted to raise their thoughts to the highest planes."

The confusion continues over such liberal use of the word "Catholic" today. A television documentary screened in May last year featured Pamela Crane, ordained minister of the Liberal Catholic Church and wearing a dog-collar, as an expert on 'Christian astrology'. The programme sought to show that some Christian clergy were sympathetic to divination of this sort, but failed to make clear that the Liberal Catholic Church could not really be called 'Christian' and that the 'T S' after it, as spelt out on her doormat, stood for 'Theosophical Society'.

Father Stephen in present-day Rochester claimed his 'valid' ordination through succession from a body descended from the Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain who were not Theosophists and therefore did not stay with the Liberal Catholic Church in 1918. Again, they elected their own leader and claimed a valid succession from the Dutch Old Catholics through Mathew, even though both the latter refused to recognise the existence of such a succession. Though not a member, Stephen was sure that the Liberal Catholic Church did not go in for collective masturbation anymore, if they ever did.

"They're very New Age," he said "they channel energies and things... I have no problem with some of the claims they make, but you'll find there's a lot of prejudice against them." Indeed, Father Stephen knew Gerard Crane, husband of Pamela and a Liberal Catholic bishop. "I've got a mitre of his downstairs," he said - the world of bishops irregular is a small one. Too small, in fact, for Father Stephen, who was leaving the Old Catholics because he was 'fed up of all the scandal'. In the 1970s Frederick Linale, of "MOST EVIL CHURCH ON EARTH" fame, was a

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and Repairers"*

bishop in the church but was stripped of office when he was found to be a child abuser. However, Linale just ignored the injunction and carried on as a bishop with his own group, still using the Old Catholic name. Father Stephen wanted to move on, taking his 'flock' - under twenty people - with him to join another body untainted by the sordid history of Linale and his ilk. The problem was where to go, organisationally speaking. He mentioned several bodies, all of them descended from questionable sources, as possible sponsors for his ministry. None were in Britain, but this doesn't matter as bishops irregular often exercise their pastoral responsibility by post. The important thing for such 'irregular' clergy is to be recognised by a bishop, often any bishop.

Stephen explained: "When you make contact with these people, you really don't know anything about each other... A chap calling himself 'Bishop Austin of London' got in touch with me about forming a new Catholic body and this looked quite promising until a friend of mine told me that Bishop Austin was really Robert Gleaves using another name." Robert Gleaves is another of Linale's associates, with a long history of child abuse and several prison terms to his name - another Old Catholic 'bishop'.

However, it would be quite wrong to tar all 'bishops irregular' and even all Old Catholics with the same brush. Linale and his associates would seem to be an extreme example of what can go on in these groups who to all intents and purposes appear to be "regular" clergy but in fact are accountable to no-one but themselves.

This view is endorsed by Alan Bain, who in 1985 self-published the most recent work on *episcopi vagantes*, *Bishops Irregular*. This was a directory of all the 'independent' bishops in the world that Bain could trace at the time, and a historical record of those that had passed away as well. Bain, now 65 and retired, had been ordained a deacon in the Reformed Catholic Church in 1977, and was consecrated a bishop in the Inde-

pendent Catholic Church in 1982. In 1985 he estimated there to be some 1,000 *episcopi vagantes* scattered around the world - no-one knows how many there are now. In 1989 he dropped his interest in bishops irregular, putting aside his mitre and episcopal functions in favour of an interest in Theosophy. He writes: "Were I writing the introduction to the 1985 edition of *Bishops Irregular*, it would be very different, not least because I can no longer support the idea of an all-male deity, nor of a divine trinity, confident in the assertion that 'God is One' without division or diminution." He describes the Old Catholic Church (of Linale, Gleaves, Simmons et al) and its organised paedophilia as 'an exception'.

Most wandering bishops would seem rather to be as Henry T Brandreth described them in his 1961 edition of *Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church*, a survey he conducted (originally in 1947) to assist his fellow Anglican clergy in establishing the status of any interlopers they might come across claiming to have succession from various Catholic, Orthodox or Anglican communions: "...some are honest and believe they that they have a genuine vocation to guide, in isolation from the rest of Christendom, the small handful of people which acknowledges their claims; some others are clearly not honest and use their supposed episcopal status as a means of personal enrichment at the expense of any who are so misguided as to support them; others again are mentally unbalanced and suffer from a *folie de grandeur*."

The latter would perhaps seem to be the case with the most famous bishop irregular of recent history. Hugh George de Willmott Newman, now deceased, was born in 1905 in Forest Gate, East London. He became interested in the Old Catholic movement in the 1920s. From his first extremely questionable consecration as a bishop in 1944 he sought to unify in his own person as many lines of succession as he could. He gained consecration after consecration from all manner of alleged bishops, and consecrated them in turn into

his own church, the Catholicate of the West. There are numerous photographs of Mar Georgius, his principal but by no means only title (other included Patriarch of Glastonbury, Apostolic Pontiff of Celtica, Prince-Catholicos of the West, Exarch of the Order of Antioch for Britain, Ruling Prelate of the Order of Corporate Reunion, etc, etc, *ad nauseum*), in full regalia, but despite a few faithful followers, his umpteen bishoprics and dominions seemed to exist only on paper. He also set up a university which granted worthless degrees for a small fee. All this while working as the General Manager and Secretary for the National Association of Cycle Traders.

One of the groups subsumed into the Catholicate of the West was the Free Catholic Church, worth noting for the history of its founder, Victor Alexander Hayman. Hayman was already an Anglican clergyman in Leyton, East London, when he was consecrated as 'Bishop of Waltham for the Free Catholic Church' in 1930 by another irregular bishop who enjoyed creating new churches. Apparently, after giving up his Church of England living, Hayman became chaplain to the British Union of Fascists and was subsequently interned on the Isle of Man during the Second World War because of his fascist connections. This information is found (originally, as far as I can tell) in Peter Anson's *Bishops at Large* (1964) - however, research at the Public Record Office turns up no mention of Hayman being interned with the other BUF members, and correspondence with a former BUF member and intimate of Oswald Mosley would seem to indicate that the BUF had no 'chaplain' whatsoever.

What is beyond doubt is that in 1949 Hayman was jailed for two years for fraud - the Daily Mail reported: "The prosecution stated that Hayman, wearing a clerical collar, obtained money for advertisements for the *Free Catholic* magazine, of which he was the general editor, when he well knew he was in no position to produce the magazine." At the trial it was revealed that he had been living for some

time on the proceeds of such frauds and that his bishop's "palace" was a basement room at a house in Highbury, North London. He was prosecuted again for a similar offence some years later and died in prison in 1960.

The particular succession of irregular consecrations which included both Hayman and De Willmott Newman, and which would become particularly significant in terms of Mar Georgius' eventual transfiguration of his movement into an 'Eastern Orthodox' body, originated with Jules de Ferrete, an ex-Dominican priest who arrived in London in 1866 claiming to have been consecrated, for the purpose of a mission in the West, as 'Bishop of Iona' by the Bishop Bedros of Emesa, of the Syrian Antiochene Church (one of the ancient Churches of the Middle East). He was carrying a translation of the 'instrument of consecration' to prove his claims, but despite his assertions that two experts from the British Museum had translated it from the original Syriac document, he was never able to produce the original or the two experts to defend himself from the charges of fraud that followed him around the capital.

In 1943 De Willmott Newman was merely 'Abbot Hugh' of the Old Catholic Orthodox Church of Europe when he attended a meeting in London of several 'bishops irregular' and their followers. The same raggle-taggle reconstituted themselves soon after as the 'Catholicate of the West', and in this body De Willmott Newman was raised to the status of Mar Georgius, 'Patriarch of Glastonbury'. Later he became the body's leader. The basis of his authority was described by him in 1955: "This Rite is not autogenic, but is... the direct spiritual heir of the Ancient Celtic Church, established at Glastonbury in AD 37, immediately after the Passion of Christ, by St Joseph of Arimathea, and afterwards extended into the Celtic and other lands of Western Christendom, and restored in 1866 upon the authority of the Syrian-Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch..."

This statement came 17

years after the categorical denial of any such restoration by the Syrian Antiochene Patriarch himself. Writing in the 1960s, Anson noted: "So far the Catholicate of the West has neither been offered membership of the World Council of Churches, nor has the Prince-Catholicos ever applied for it. The Glastonbury Patriarchate still awaits recognition by its fellow Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Moscow... If the truth must be told, the Catholicate of the West has never been much more than an unsubstantial pageant, a fascinating castle in the air... conjured up by the versatile patriarchal Secretary and Registrar of the Incorporated Cycle Traders and Repairers. Mar Georgius is the magician to whom the credit must be given for having kept it alive on paper for the last nineteen years."

Until relatively recently, the 'church' of De Willmott Newman was known, after more name changes, as the Orthodox Church of the British Isles. It now has around 250 members, one bishop, seven priests and two deacons. At its head is William Newman Norton, 50 years old and the nephew of De Willmott Newman, whose ecclesiastical title is 'Abba Seraphim'. Father Sergius has been a priest in the church for 31 years, having been ordained by Mar Georgius himself. The faithful in Sergius' parish in South London borrow a nearby Anglican church once a week to hold a service for around seven people. Sergius, who sports the heavy beard and black robes of an Orthodox priest, admits his church has a chequered history: "We were one of the Free Catholic Churches, but head and shoulders above the rest, or we would never have been accepted into the Coptic Orthodox Church."

This last remark is particularly significant - notwithstanding Anson's assessment some 35 years previously, the British Orthodox Church has achieved the Holy Grail of irregular episcopacy, recognition by one of the ancient Patriarchates. In this case not Antioch, which supposedly was the origin of the British Orthodox Church in the first place, but Alexandria, seat of

the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate. However this is a trifling detail compared with the advantages of being incorporated with a bona fide Orthodox Church. The British Orthodox Church is now recognised as a 'real' Church by a historical and legitimate Eastern Orthodox Church - this is, finally and some years after his own death, the realisation of De Willmott Newman's 'dream'.

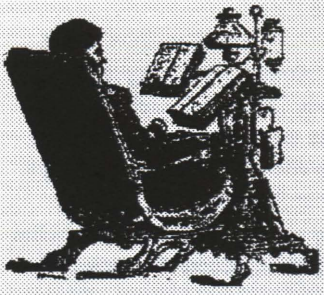
The Orthodox Church of the British Isles became a Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate in 1994. I shall let Abba Seraphim's own publicity tell the story: "In the 1990's the British Orthodox Church was a scattered fellowship of congregations under the care of Mar Seraphim and Mar Ignatius. An increasing number of people from a very wide range of backgrounds were making contact, finding in the British Orthodox Church the fulfilment of their aspirations towards a Traditional, Orthodox and British Faith. Mar Seraphim was invited to visit His Holiness Pope Shenouda III in Cairo at this time, and a very warm sense of fellowship was immediately present between them. In a series of discussions over some months it became clear that God was leading the British Orthodox Church and the ancient Coptic Orthodox Church to enter into a union. The British Orthodox Church began to use the Liturgy of St James, perhaps the most ancient of Liturgies, and to prepare for union with the Coptic Church. It seemed to all who awaited this event that God's hand was upon the Church and that he was about to do something wonderful for Orthodoxy in Britain. At Pentecost

1994, in Cairo, Mar Seraphim was made a Metropolitan of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the British Orthodox Church became an indivisible part of the Coptic Orthodox Church. History had come full circle and the missionary church had been re-united with its Middle Eastern roots." Elsewhere in the official potted history of the British Orthodox Church is the tale of its origins in Jules de Ferrete's mission to England, without mention of the Syrian rebuttal of any such mission in 1938, nor a similar one issued in

1958.

Abba Seraphim and all his followers were accepted into Coptic Orthodox Church "on the basis that there was no significant difference in doctrine", according to Father Sergius. Could the Egyptians also have been swayed by the alleged Coptic Orthodox line of succession Mar Georgius added to his person in 1951? This was received from Denis Quartey Arthur, an Afro-Caribbean cleric who called himself 'Mar Lukos' and claimed to represent a Coptic Orthodox Patriarchy when he arrived in Chelsea. When Mar Georgius heard about him, he was sceptical of his claim but on seeing a document of consecration with episcopal seals which he felt could not have been forged by a 'Harlem negro', he changed his tune and received consecration from Mar Lukos. In fact Mar Lukos himself had been consecrated into the Coptic Orthodox line of succession by 'Bishop St-John-the-Divine' Hickerson, who ran the Church of the Living God in New York. Believing he himself was God, Hickerson ran into trouble when some of his followers, the 'Temples of God', ran amok and stabbed some of the ungodly. For whatever reason, the Coptic Orthodox accepted the British Orthodox Church without examining their clergy or their history too closely. While for many years Father Sergius could be accused of being an imposter when walking the streets dressed as an Orthodox priest, now he is completely justified. Indeed, Abba Seraphim himself was recently quoted as an authoritative Orthodox spokesman in an article in the Guardian (12/10/98) about the increasing number of converts in England to the Orthodox faith.

Alan Bain is dismissive of this development in the history of bishops irregular, the first time in this country that any group has succeeded in their mission of being recognised as a 'true' Church, by other Churches, the media and the public: "I would say that it makes the Coptic Orthodox Church appear foolish." But somewhere, perhaps, Mar Georgius, Patriarch of Glastonbury, is having the last laugh.



BOOK REVIEWS

Reviews by Peter Rogerson, except where stated

These books demonstrate the extent to which the flying saucer imagery and mythos permeated everyday life in the 1950s

• **Dewayne B. Johnson and Kenn Thomas. *Flying Saucers over Los Angeles*, with commentary by David Hatcher Childress. Adventures Unlimited, 1998. £11.99.**

• **Eric and Leif Nesheim. *Saucer Attack: pop culture in the age of flying saucers* Kitchen Sink Press, 1997. £12.95.**

Two treats for 1950's nostalgia fans; the work by Johnson is a reprint of his unpublished 1950 thesis *Flying Saucers, Fact or Fiction*, a Masters thesis in journalism at UCLA written in August 1950, making it the second UFO book ever written, after Keyhoe's *Flying Saucers Are Real*, but before Scully's *Behind the Flying Saucers*.

Johnson's however never got published. It consists of chapter abstracting various news clippings, then interviews with believers, sceptics and a study of the psycho-social aspects of the reports. Johnson concludes flying saucers are real, but more probably American than Martian. The main interest may lie in his portrayal of the nifty almost paranoid Ken Arnold, strumming on the desk while being interviewed to avoid his voice being recorded (He perhaps had reason to be paranoid, the journalist concerned was secretly recording him). What we get here is almost UFOs before ufology, though some of the themes were already coalescing. The image of the flying saucer itself was still fluid, and in-

deed Johnson concluded that the 'real' flying saucers were the cylindrical things such as allegedly seen by Chiles and Whitted and that Arnold saw something like weather balloons.

As early as 1950, some of the themes that *Magonia* has promoted were being commented on, for example that the Navy School of Aviation Medicine had already determined that staring too long at a fixed light could induce vertigo and a kind of hypnosis in which pilots could dog-fight with stars or mistake ground lights for other aircraft, flying saucers or whatever, and even have outright hallucinations: "when a flyer starts chasing an illuminated weather balloon or star and vertigo and hypnosis sets in, the pilot can come down and practically tell you how many rivets were on the nose of that Martian space ship". In the chapter on the psycho-social aspects he reports on some pretty sophisticated speculation for 1950.

We can see this fascination in the wide range of excellent visual material in the Nesheims' book, which considers flying saucers and space invaders as a topic of pop art and kitsch. Colour illustrations from book jackets, magazine covers, (both UFO and SF), film posters and publicity material, and a wide range of toys. There is a model flying saucer from the mid 1950's with a green, large headed, small bodied pilot, who *must* have been based on the Mekon. There is the cover from a 1960 paperback

edition of *The Midwich Cuckoos*, which features a pair of glowing disembodied eyes, as reported by Barney Hill. There is the 1957 Jack Davis drawing depicting a crashed saucer, half buried in the New Mexico desert, which is virtually identical to some of the claimed Roswell testimony descriptions. Which came first (did anyone ever ask Davis, or did he die long before the modern Roswell legend started)

What emerges from both these books is the extent to which the flying saucer imagery and mythos permeated everyday life. One did not have to read flying saucer books and magazines to know what flying saucers looked like (It was the same in Britain. I dimly remember being on a kiddies' flying-saucer ride in Lewis's department store in Manchester when I was very small, must be 1953-55, long before I knew that flying saucers were mysterious).

The Nesheims see the pop culture of flying saucers as reflecting the anxieties of the age of the cold war, in which Martians and Communists were virtually interchangeable. As Johnson finished his thesis, he reported the start of the Korean war, and his fear that the cold war was going to get hot. His name never reappeared in connection with ufology, and Thomas and Childress were unable to track him down. Could it be that he, a young man in 1950, was destined to be one of the victims of that conflict?

- **Alan Baker. *Destination Earth: a history of alleged alien presence*. Blandford, 1998. £9.99.**
- **Raymond A. Robinson. *Alien Intent, a Dire Warning: The truth behind the cover up*. Blandford, 1998. £9.99.**

There must be a logical explanation of how stuff like this gets published. I can only assume that someone in the Blandford office is running a book on who can commission the most pointless UFO book of the year. The prize for all time nuttiness has been handsomely won by *Song of the Greys* so that is now out of the running, so general dullness and serving no purpose whatsoever by being published is what is being aimed at. These two, which are compilations of UFO folklore by authors who may or may not believe what they report -you can never really tell - and whose information is gleaned from the boxful of books they bought at a car boot sale are excellent examples of the genre. Of the two Baker seems to believe rather less than Robinson, and finally comes up with our old friend the information field in one of its many guises. Robinson, on the other hand would have stood a better chance at the nuttiness prize, if the competition wasn't so stiff.

Frank Furedi. *The Culture of Fear: risk taking and the morality of low expectation*. Cassell, 1997. £12.95.

While on the face of it this critique of the contemporary culture of caution, vulnerability and fear may not appear to have much connection with the main topics of Magonia, the discussion is in fact very relevant, for the fears that we are studying are in many ways the (il)logical extension of the fears of wider society. Furedi sees a society whose icons are no longer heroes, or examples of courage, endurance and fortitude, but 'the vulnerable' and 'the victim', a world in which both nature, technology and other human beings are seen not as sources of strength and joy, but as risks and dangers. Even the sun, which virtually all previous human cultures have seen as the source of life and hope is seen primarily as a bringer of cancer, and human beings are seen simultaneously as both weak and dangerous, in need of custodianship.

In this climate we are never perceived as safe. Furedi notes that neighbours, once seen as a source of strength and comradeship, are now seen as a danger, particularly to children. The home and family, once refuges from the insecure world, are now

themselves seen as a source of threat. We can see that in this climate the fantasy threats of Satanic abusers and alien abductors and feral strange beasts, are a distillation of these fears. The ordinary hides the nameless threat; if the home is no place of safety, then not even being alone behind locked, padlocked doors and shuttered windows can protect you from the grey meanies. The users and abusers can come through the walls for you.

This climate, in which all human motivation is suspect, provides a fertile soil for the growth of the conspiracy theories which we have studied. THEY are all liars, trying to do us down, hiding things from us, being in league with the terrifying forces of change.

Furedi argues that as social consensus morality fractures, medicine becomes the new morality; instead of conduct being described as immoral or wicked, it can be condemned and restrained by being described as 'risky' or 'unsafe', while whole ranges of human behaviour are medicalised. Differences among human beings can no longer be accepted or indeed celebrated as part of the natural human condition, instead departures from an idealised norm become syndromes to be treated. Human beings are no longer seen as morally

autonomous beings, but as passive victims of either past trauma, or of their genes and hormones.

Ultimately these fears will consume even themselves. The cult of the therapist leads inevitably to the therapist becoming one more threat. Thus people in the false memory debate, have never, you understand, made up tales of abuse to get back at parents they at whom they feel inarticulate anger because their lives are not the wonderful happy ones seen in adverts. Oh no, they said these things 'because a therapist made me do it'. Once again they can become passive victims.

Some idea of where this sort of thing will end is shown in the recent advice given by the Local Government Association to teachers, that they should not rub sunscreen on children's arms and legs for fear of being accused of child abuse. The fears that children cannot go out in the sun without being covered in creams which add to the profits of the multinational pharmaceutical companies come in direct collision with the fear that any one who touches a child must be a paedophile. Our fears cancel each other out and reduce us to impotence.

Marc Abrahams. *The Best of Annals of Improbable Research*. W. H. Freeman, 1998. \$12.95.

Collection of articles from the American satirical science magazine, most noted for its sponsoring of the IgNoble prizes. The funny bits in this collection tend to be those which were taken from other journals and presented as real science, such as the one about a Norwegian who caught, well, eh, em, a 'social disease' from an inflatable doll, not careful enough with who he shared it with you see (great new social panic, perhaps inner city doll exchanges next), or the Japanese barmpot and his microscopic fossils, including microscopic people, as mad as you can get. With real life being so hilariously absurd, intentional satire tends to fall flat, as did far too many pieces in here, they just weren't funny.



Kenneth Fields. *Lancashire Magic and Mystery: secrets of the Red Rose County*. Sigma, 1998. £6.95

A scissors and paste collection of folklore, paranormal stories, UFOs, crimes, disasters and eccentricities which don't fit too well together. It shows little evidence of scholarship or research. The story of Spring Heel Jack in Everton is resurrected again, 25 years after Roger Sandell buried it, with an alleged appearance in Warrington added, which is just a transposition of the Everton story. The source Fields must have used is a book which we will leave nameless, which may well be one of the very worst commercially published books this century. Sadly local history is full of people who don't know how to critically evaluate sources - rather like ufology in fact

Martin Gardner. *The Wreck of the Titanic Foretold*, 2nd ed Prometheus, 1998

The main portion of this book is devoted to reprints of literary works, notably Morgan Robertson's *Futility*, which appear to foretell the Titanic disaster. As the alleged precognitive bits only make up a small portion of these stories, perhaps their main interest will be to devotees of nineteenth century Victorian fiction. The interest for the rest of us will be Martin Gardner's introduction and preface to the new edition, and notes on the individual pieces. His writings are as sceptical as ever, and given the nature of the material he is discussing, probably justifiably so. Perhaps in the preface he should have noted and made some comments on George Behe's *Titanic: psychic forewarnings of a tragedy* (Patrick Stephens, 1988) where a large number of premonitions are discussed. Of course the vast majority of these are reported after the event

Rodney Davies. *Doubles: the enigma of the second self*. Robert Hale, 1998. £15.99

A study of the phenomena of the double, hallucinations or apparitions of living people who are not physically present at the time. Sceptical Magonians like yours truly will find the more believable stories in here as evidence that people have all sorts of odd 'virtual experiences'. Several of the stories relate people hearing the sounds of family members getting up, so seeing them enter the room, while they are in fact still in bed asleep. Some may indeed be cases of sleep walking, but most are almost certainly good cases of false awakening on the part of the percipient. Few of the experiences also fall into the bedroom visitor category.

However as Mr Davies has done his contemplation, opened up his third eye etc and generally become an advanced occultist, he can assure me I am completely wrong on this. No these are cases of the projection of an actual physical double. This double can change shape and size to become an astral were-animal (though some were-animals we are assured are caused by occultists projecting their doubles into the corpses of recently dead animals. This is one of the reasons why so many cats are being stolen, once they have been skinned their bodies can be possessed by occultists who want to turn themselves into Surrey pumas and Bodmin beasts).

One of the problems facing spiritualists and others who want to argue that ghosts and the like are real physical objects is that they wear clothes and may be accompanied by inanimate objects. This is usually got round by saying that the clothes etc. are thought forms composed from the astral bodies, Mr Davies knows better; they are indeed the real astral doubles of clothes. He recounts a case of an astral bus which went scooting round the streets of London, while its physical body lay sleeping in the garage. If we combine these two amazing revelations we surely have the final solution to the UFO mystery, surely flying saucers are

Richard Abanes. *End Time Visions: the road to Armageddon*. Four Walls Eight Windows, 1998. £13.99.

This detailed critique of end of the world beliefs, is aimed at a similar audience to the promoters of the end of the world prophecies conservative Christians, and goes into much more detail in refuting their claims, and quoting their literature against them. He is especially effective in tracking down the frequent changes of date and various excuses as to why the world had failed to end, some of them displaying the most amazing *chutzpah*. Among the worst offenders were the Jehovah's Witnesses whose dates for the end of the world have advanced from 1874 through 1914, 1925 and 1975, before they gave up trying for specific dates. The spiel seems to rely roughly on arguing 'just because we said the world was going to end in 1925, the foolish actually thought that we meant that the world was going to end in 1925, which is, of course, not what we meant at all'. The fearful are reassured that, contrary to doomsayers claims, that there is no objective increase in the number of earthquakes, hurricanes and other 'signs of the end'. Abanes also points out the connections between the apocalyptic evangelists and the radical right, whose antics we have noted several times in these pages.

The Christian agenda is put forward relatively lightly, and there is much interesting information, and £13.99 for a 400-plus page hardback is quite a bargain these days.

the transmogrified astral doubles of sleeping trams, which confined in waking hours to the rut of tram lines, when asleep dream of flying wild and free through the air.

James L. Walden. *The Ultimate Alien Agenda: the re-engineering of humankind*. Llewellyn Publications, 1998. \$7.99.

Just when you thought the abduction stories couldn't get any wilder this happens. Dr Walden, presented in the introduction as a former college professor turned city administrator, but who turns out to be a 'psychic counselor' (wouldn't you know it), recounts his abduction experiences. From the details given these appear very much to be sleep paralysis episodes connected with a narcoleptic illness. Soon he learns all his problems are caused by them Greys. Indeed he is possessed by a Grey, and ends up channelling (or was he the reincarnation of, who knows) a reptilian called Big Head.

Walden recounts a sexual assault by a female baby sitter as a child. This, it turns out, was at the instigation of the Greys and

their friends. Indeed he and his therapist Barbara Bartholic agree that many cases of incest child abuse and sexual obsession are caused by THEM.

At this point you begin to suspect that Bill Clinton had really missed a trick. Go on TV, Bill and say that you and Monica are both alien hybrid abductees, and that their abductors made them do the wild thing, and *that* dress was being kept so they could continue to use it for scientific research. There are enough bozos out there who'd believe you.

Kevin Randle and Russ Estes. *Faces of the Visitors: an illustrated reference to alien contact*. Fireside Books/Simon and Schuster, 1997. £8.99.

A collection of occupant reports with pencil sketches of the alleged occupants. Their crudity is explained by saying they want to keep as close as possible to the witnesses' own sketches. Randle makes the useful point that the notion of a uniform occupant, the Grey, is a complete simplification. The main trouble with this book is

that the authors seem unable to make up their minds whether they are simply presenting examples of modern folklore, or whether they are in some way arguing that the various beings are 'real' outside of the imagination of the percipients. This is certainly suggested at by including reliability indexes, some of which give high marks to well known contactee hoaxes. The dagger is pushed further into Glenn Dennis, but other, equally improbable Roswell tales are taken at face value. Nevertheless some evidence of critical thought exists in the main body of the text, but in appendixes on the 1954 and 1973 waves, this is thrown to the wind, and it's all aliens and spaceships again, despite the fact that many of the cases in the 1954 listing, taken from Vallee are known hoaxes.

• **Barry Parker. *Alien Life: the search for extraterrestrials and beyond*. Plenum, 1998. \$27.95.**

• **Seth Shostak. *Sharing the Universe: perspectives on extraterrestrial life*. Berekley Hills Books, 1998. \$11.99**

• **Michael White. *Life Out There: the truth of and search for extraterrestrial life*. Little Brown, 1998. £16.99.**

These three books all cover more or less the same ground: the Martian meteorite, the possibilities of life on Mars, Europa and Titan, the discoveries of extraterrestrial planets, and SETI project. Some attempt is made to visualise what ET life would be like, and explain the claimed paradox of why they aren't here. All refer to UFOs, of which Shostak is the most sceptical, while Parker appears to believe that abductions and UFO stories are stumping scientists (actually the abductions aren't stumping those who don't want to believe in wonders), but does not favour the ETH as a probable explanation. White is clearly intrigued by the Mars face (demolished by the latest Mars probe; cynical Magonians suspect that the face had by then done its job as a piece of PR for future missions - you know of course NASA

doesn't think it's a face but it is intriguing...).

On the question of what aliens would be like Shostak and Parker doubt very much they would be constructed of DNA, though of course they would be built up from some similar self-reproducing molecule, the product of its own planet's chemical evolution. White on the other hand argues they must be composed of DNA, and is generally less willing to see ET's as fundamentally alien. Shostak argues most strongly for the differentness of ETs, as likely to be of possessors of a higher level of complex thought processes, a metaculture. Clearly signals from such a source would be largely indecipherable.

Though all three writers to varying degrees accept that aliens would be very different from us, they still seem to believe they would share our interests and technology. But if Shostak and Parker are right and their brains are

different from ours, then the chances of them being engaged on the same projects are nil.

Just as an additional note on how complex the notion of intelligence is, the British press has recently been full of a 15 year old lad who is going to Cambridge University, though he is barely able to read and write. His lectures and replies are done on tape. A slight genetic mutation has meant that the parts of his brain which deal with aural language are well above normal in operation, but the parts which deal with the sort of spatial skills needed in reading, writing and just getting about are undeveloped. Like the Williams' children I noted before we have an example of a different form of intelligence, barely compatible with our society, existing in one species. Still, the notion of creatures vastly biologically different from ourselves doing our things cannot be exorcised.

Peter Rogerson

Albert Budden. *Electric UFOs; fireballs, electromagnetics and abnormal states*. Blandford, 1998. £16.99.

We live in an era of fear, as Frank Furedi points out in his book reviewed elsewhere in this *Magonia* by Peter Rogerson. Our lives seem to be dominated by scares about food, pollution, crime, sunshine, passive smoking, the air we breathe; almost anything it seems is potentially threatening. It is not surprising then that Albert Budden presents us with a new, all-pervasive and absolutely inescapable scare. We can eat only organic vegetables grown in our own back garden, forsake alcohol and meat, take our children to and from school in armoured four-wheel drive vehicles, cover ourselves in factor-80 suncream anytime we set foot outdoors and wave our arms around frantically making ineffectual flapping movements whenever we see anyone smoking within five hundred yards of us. But it is to no avail.

Our whole environment is awash with electromagnetic waves, from radio and TV transmitters, mo-

bile phones, power plants, kitchen equipment, electric motors and a million other sources of 'electromagnetic pollution'. And short of living our whole lives inside a Faraday Cage (and surely someone is) there is nothing at all we can do about it. Now, lots of people take electromagnetic pollution seriously. It has been claimed in court (unsuccessfully, however) that the presence of high-voltage underground cables in a London suburb led to an increase in cases of leukemia amongst local children. There is even an organisation called the Powerwatch Network set up to monitor and promote such claims. And, on the face of it, it does not seem an entirely unreasonable idea that close proximity to very large currents of electricity might have some effect on human biology.

But that, surely, is the point: very close, very large currents. Budden goes much further than this and seems to be stating that almost any sort of electrical energy can have an enormous effect on biological and physical systems. Not the least of these is a propensity for making humans be-

lieve they have been abducted by aliens, quite apart from a purely physical effect which creates UFO-like electrical phenomena in the atmosphere. These events occur in what Budden calls 'hotspots', where a combination of electromagnetic effects overlap and reinforce each others' strength. The only problem is that almost everywhere seems to be a hotspot by the author's reckoning.

Besides UFOs, the EM effect also allegedly causes poltergeist phenomena. Budden re-examines the most famous British polt case, at Enfield. Here he finds a wealth of electromagnetic sources: the local railway, power lines, a reservoir (?), a sub-station in a neighbour's front garden, and the fact that the location is equidistant from Stansted and Luton airports. Now Luton and Stansted are 27 miles apart and both 20 miles from Enfield. If the air control radars at these two airports can produce effects at that distance such as wrenching iron radiators off walls and throwing bricks around rooms, I'll make sure that I use Gatwick for my holiday flights from now on!

The fact is that almost anywhere in Britain, Europe and most of North America, and large parts of the rest of the world, is going to have a high level of electromagnetic activity. I am writing these words at a computer which is pouring out energy, a CD player is going away in the background, electric trains pass every few minutes about a hundred yards away, power cables run to dozens of houses and flats all around me. And I'm sure where you're reading these words it's not much different.

Budden explains this by claiming that some people display electromagnetic hypersensitivity, so EM waves effect them more than others. This may be the case, although it would appear that such an ailment is recognised by very few doctors, and those that do recognise and treat it seem to be clustered around the Breakspear Hospital which features prominently in this, as in Budden's earlier book. EM sensitivity does not however explain the physical, 'poltergeist' effects Budden credits to EM 'hot-

spots'.

And this, of course, brings us on to Mr Hutchison and the poltergeist machine, about which I was so scathing in *Magonia* a year or so back. I had hoped that this book would, as Albert Budden promised me, show positive proof of the effectiveness of this machine, but his account here takes us no further. We are told about investigations by the Max Planck Institute, McDonnell Douglas and Los Alamos, but are shown no evidence of these or their findings. Instead we get more gee-whizz accounts of blocks of concrete bursting into flames, spontaneous metal bending, levitating yoghurt and the rest of it. These events often seem to occur "unexpectedly at remote locations". How inconvenient. On one occasion some potential investors were coming to examine the machine: "On the morning of a demonstration for them it blew one of its own transformers apart" - how very inconvenient.

However, I must not say too much about Mr Hutchison's Amazing Machine, because, as Budden tells us, I will be "haunted for years to come" by my dismissive attitude, "as responses [to my article] from scientists from America, Canada and Europe already indicate". Needless to say I have not seen any of these responses.

Amongst the effects ascribed to EM pollution are the appearance and disappearance of large volumes of water. A number of physical and psychological effects are also apparently caused by EM pollution in hotspots to hypersensitive individuals, including one symptom I found particularly interesting. He describes people suffering from what he calls 'the religiose [sic.] outlook': "Another form seems to be quasi-scientific in theme, and such preoccupations are displayed as a strange non-stop, almost involuntary rambling, usually concerned with how science has taken a fundamentally wrong turning in its history, and how they can correct this with their convoluted theories and outlandish concepts".

Does this remind you of anyone? Answers on a postcard, please.

John Rimmer



It is necessary for any serious student of UFO reports and ufology to take account of the influence of Clark's personal views on the content and treatment of the subjects discussed

Jerome Clark. *The UFO Encyclopedia 2nd Edition: The Phenomenon from the Beginning*, Omnigraphics, Detroit, 1998. \$140.

Of the 273 entries in this work, all but twelve were written by Jerome Clark. It is thus necessary for any serious student of UFO reports and ufology to take account of the influence of Clark's personal views on the content and treatment of the subjects discussed.

Clark believes that the ETH should be taken seriously as a possible explanation for some of the more puzzling UFO events, but other theories are considered at great length. In his article on the ETH, he gives a history of its development, but does not give any compelling reason why we should use it as a working hypothesis.

His explanations for the revival of the ETH in the USA include the release of official information on reports of radar/visual sightings and daylight discs, and the revival of interest in stories about crashes and retrievals of UFOs. However, if we look elsewhere in *The UFO Encyclopedia*, we will see that he obviously doesn't believe most of the crashed-saucer stories. Even Roswell does not get an entry to itself, but is dealt with briefly in the entry on 20th-century UFO crashes and retrievals.

Another reason, and perhaps the main one, for the revival of the ETH "was the conviction of some that occult-flavored speculations were neither meaningful nor necessary, that the ETH was such a natural reading of the UFO phenomenon that attempts to replace it with dubious supernatural explanatory schemes were little more than excursions into futility and obscurantism." (p. 387)

Clark's distaste for occult speculation about UFOs is obvious, and it is interesting to trace in this publication his thesis which argues that some theorists interpreted the writings of paranormalist ufologists in such a way as to develop the psychosocial hypothesis (PSH). It seems that the early PSHers were influenced by the writings of con-

tributors to *Flying Saucer Review* (FSR), and the opinions expressed by Charles Bowen, and by Gordon Creighton, who succeeded him as editor. (Incidentally, Clark seems to believe that Bowen and Creighton were at one in sharing an occultist, paranoid view of the UFO phenomenon, but Bowen once confided to me: "Gordon Creighton - frightfully nice chap, but nutty as a fruitcake.")

Two of the regular contributors to FSR were John Keel and Jacques Vallee, who were authors of two of the seminal books (according to Clark's interpretation) which led to the development of the PSH. These books were *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse* and *Passport to Magonia*. PSHers did not interpret these books as demonological or occult works, as Clark says they were intended to be interpreted, but found them useful as a basis to compare the old fairy lore with the modern UFO stories. Keel's unscientific speculations and Vallee's vague ramblings did not worry them. They were not interested in the paranormal; they were interested in studying the social and psychological mechanisms that create and sustain the UFO myth in the absence of any convincing physical evidence for the reality of alien spacecraft.

Clark attacks the PSH by citing folklorist Thomas E. Bullard's assertion that parallels between traditional fairy stories and modern UFO encounters are "oblique and speculative". He also criticises writers such as Hilary Evans for saying that many visionary experiences, including UFO encounters, are generated by the psychological needs of the percipients. "Such speculations, founded as they are on Evans's subjective impressions from very little evidence, have no empirical basis." (p. 755) However, I think few psychologists would deny that many people are responding to psychological needs - which might be unconscious - when they suffer from certain types of illness, or report strange and disturbing experiences.

The key to Clark's method of dismissing the PSH is a tendency to place UFO reports into

well-defined classes. This is common among American ufologists, who think they can easily distinguish between the lies of the contactees, the delusions of the abductees, the visions of close-encounter percipients, and the truthful and clear-headed testimony given by those folk who see UFOs of a type regarded as politically correct by nuts-and-bolts EThers.

On the other hand, PSHers see UFO reports as a finely-graded spectrum ranging from carefully planned hoaxes, through misinterpretations of ordinary stimuli, to elaborate delusions and hallucinations. They realise that attempting to place reports into rigidly defined and mutually exclusive categories has so far failed to isolate any unexplained reports which deserve extensive study.

It has to be admitted, though, that there is at least one type of report to which the PSH has a fairly limited application - the radar/visual UFO. Arguably the most important entry in the Encyclopedia is a paper by Brad Sparks on the RB-47 case of 17 July 1957. This incident baffled Project Blue Book and the Condon Committee. Interest in the case waned in the 1970s after Philip Klass issued a self-published document *The RB-47 UFO Case - A New Explanation* (1971) and his book *UFOs Explained* (1974) in which he provided a detailed reconstruction of the case which attempted to explain it in terms of confusion caused by anomalous radar propagation, together with sightings of a meteor, stars, planets and other aircraft. His explanation was sufficiently ingenious (or sufficiently complicated) to convince many UFO believers.

As Sparks re-examined the evidence, he found inconsistencies in Klass's account. According to this, at one point the RB-47 would have been flying at supersonic speed - impossible for that type of aircraft. It was also said that the aircrew were fooled by radar signals from Biloxi, but Sparks discovered that this was a training radar and that it would certainly not have been operating in the middle of the night in the middle of summer when there were no training

courses in progress. Klass had also suggested that there might have been an encounter with an airliner, American Airlines Flight 966, and said that unfortunately there were no records of the precise details available. Sparks shows that there were abundant records of that flight, for the simple reason that it had been involved that night in a near-collision with another airliner. The other airliner had taken violent evasive action, resulting in injuries to 10 passengers. At no time did Flight 966 come within a few hundred miles of the RB-47.

Sparks has every reason to be proud of his painstaking re-investigation of this classic case, but perhaps he is being a little overconfident when he states unequivocally: "The RB-47 incident is the first conclusive scientific proof for the existence of UFOs." (p. 789) I am sure there will be sceptics eager to pick holes in his new version of the incident.

A pleasing feature of the Encyclopedia is the large amount of detail given in descriptions of important UFO reports. There are many relevant facts which are not mentioned in most popular books on the subject. This detailed treatment enables the reader to gain new insights into the phenomenon. This is a welcome change from many reference works which try to cram too many items in, making each entry so terse as to be almost useless. Readers will also find relevant details of their favourite ufologists and some of their unfavourite ones. I am reminded of a certain British UFO encyclopedia which included entries on various obscure people, presumably friends of the editor, but made no mention of Jenny Randles. Clark avoids this kind of nonsense and his choice of names seems reasonable, considering that the *Encyclopedia* is mainly for American readers.

It is easy to find your way around as there is extensive cross-referencing, as well as contents and index. Each entry has a bibliography and there is a full bibliography with over 4,000 entries. If you have ever written anything mildly interesting about UFOs you

will probably find your name there.

You will also be interested to learn, from a note on terminology, that ufology should be pronounced yoo-FAHL-uh-gee. Try that down the pub if you want to raise a laugh. More seriously, though, Clark shows a marked intolerance of written English which deviates in the smallest way from his idea of standard American. The result of this is that many of the quotations he gives are peppered with the dreaded [sic]. Hastily written memos and clumsily typed newsletters get the full treatment, to the point where it all becomes rather distracting to the reader. He has very rigid views about English usage. For example, I was surprised to see [sic] inserted in many places where there were no errors. Eventually I realised that many of them were there because Clark insists that collective nouns must never be pluralised. Perhaps someone could persuade him to

adopt the more reasonable rule of simply correcting any obvious errors and inserting [sic] only where meanings are unclear.

Apart from my literary criticism and nit-picking, armchair niggling, what do I think of this great work? I think it is surely one of the most useful and informative works on the subject yet published. As for its qualities as an encyclopedia, one has only to compare it with other efforts at compiling UFO reference books. It is way ahead of them.

The two hefty volumes of the Encyclopedia carry a hefty price tag, so casual browsers in bookshops are unlikely to buy it unless they have fat wallets and strong arms. It is to be hoped that a more affordable edition will eventually appear. Meanwhile, it should be bought by every serious reference library.

John Harney

Steve Moore (Comp.) *Fortean Times General Index Issues 1 - 66*. John Brown, 1997. £30.00.

Although physically smaller than Jerome Clark's massive compilation of UFO data, this is an equally impressive labour of bibliographic diligence. Steve Moore's index covers *Fortean Times* from the first typed, pasted and instant-printed issue of the original manifestation as *The News* in 1973, through to the professional *FT* of 1992. After that date the magazine is indexed through the annual compilation volumes. This book is in fact a series of indexes covering topics like people, places, organisations and book reviews, as well as an author and title index to articles. A date index allows you to find out which Fortean events happened on any particular day in history.

Every conceivable aspect of Fortean phenomena is covered. The layout is easy to follow, and I cannot fault it on comprehensiveness and accuracy (a librarian's main criteria for judging indexes). However, I cannot help but wonder just how much it will be used by researchers. The price reflects the huge amount of work that has gone into it, but also reflects the small sales that the publishers feel it will generate. Surely it is really part of *Fortean Times*'s larger project to make Forteanism 'respectable' by building up the framework of an academic discipline around it, with structures such as indexes, institutes and scholarly journals. I'm not sure how many people outside the *FT* team are convinced by all this - not many of the monthly magazine readers I suspect. Even within the Fortean 'community' of writers and researchers there is, with a few notable exceptions - most of whom are linked to *FT* and *Fortean Studies* anyway - little evidence of much activity in the archives and storerooms of Forteanism. Whatever the reasons though, this book is welcome.

John Rimmer

Whitley and Anne Strieber. *The Communion Letters*. Pocket Books 1998. £7.99

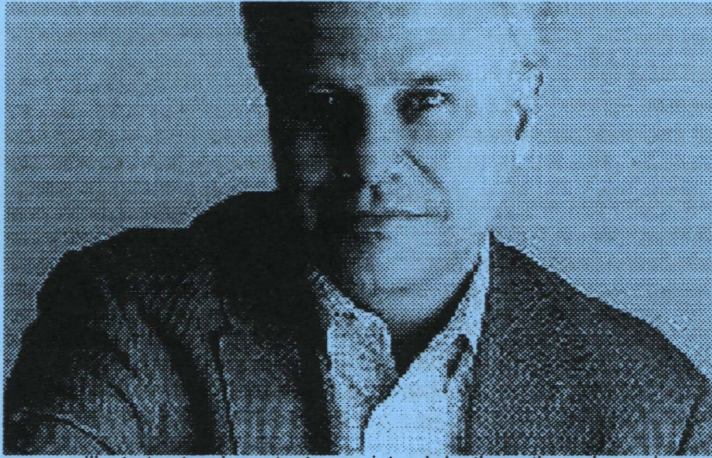
If, as is probably quite reasonable, we look at the belief in alien abduction as being one of the signs of the existence of a *de facto* religious movement, then Whitley Strieber is its leader and exemplar. For those of us who write and research critically into abductions, others may appear more important. For us, Hopkins, Mack and Jacobs are the key figures, because they set out the ever-widening parameters for the alien experience, challenging our conc

cepts of logic, reason, and evidence in the process. But Hopkins, Mack and Jacobs are not - explicitly at any rate - abduction experiencers.

Strieber, on the other hand, is the experimenter *par excellence*, the man apparently chosen by the aliens, his 'others', to make the abduction experience known to the world. He is the mystic among the leaders of the abduction movement, the visionary, the high priest. The other three are, to those who believe, mere analysts, theologians: the Inquisition or Opus Dei of the abduction faith. Respected but not revered.

Strieber has, from the outset, sought to bring others into his system of experience and belief, and has more than succeeded in that aim. In *The Communion Letters* he thanks "the nearly two hundred thousand people who have written us describing their own experiences" and presents more than sixty of these accounts. They form a valuable body of source material which will inform any analysis of the abduction issue.

They can also, almost all, be analysed and interpreted in the tradition of mystical religious experience, and contain identifiable elements of astral projection/OOBE, theosophical concepts, and spiritualism, deriving from the pre-abduction background of the experiencers. The influence of Strieber and the post-1980 abduction mythos is apparent from the outset in some accounts, but more frequently it overlays perceived experiences pre-existing, or even substantially different to, alien abduction. This



process illustrates two important points for those investigating individual perceptions of anomalous experience.

The first is very psychosocial, very *Magonia*. That the perception of, and explanations accepted as causing, such experiences can be moulded and revised in accordance with popular, accessible explanations that were not even invented when that experience took place.

The second point is more complex, more challenging. That there is little to be gained - for sceptics or believers - by studying any one type or period of perceived anomalous experience in isolation, because the general experience seems to occur anyway, regardless of time or place, only shaped and explained by prevalent psychosocial factors. I have long thought that the continuity, the persistence of anomalous experience, from God and Devil to Spirit to Other/Alien, with its underpinning 'traveling' (Heaven, Hell, Faerie-Land, Sabbat, Spirit World, OBE, RV, abduction) motifs, is potentially the strongest argument against the reality of any one particular element of the range. But putting that argument effectively presents major difficulties.

Because we are neither believers nor experiencers ourselves, believers and experiencers will not listen to us, or accept our challenge to what they know to be true. Until one or more of the abductee priesthood recants, few of its followers will feel the need, or have the confidence, to do the same. And until then, Strieber will continue to transmute anomalies

into abductions, through an alchemy of belief that is nowhere better demonstrated than in this book.

Kevin McClure

Jenny Randles. *Something in the Air*, Robert Hale, London, 1998. £16.99

This book is a plea for aircraft encounters with UFOs to be taken more seriously. To this end Jenny Randles appeals to her readers to avoid the extremes of dismissing such reports as nonsense, or attributing them to the activities of ETs in their flying saucers.

Some reports of aerial encounters with UFOs cannot be attributed to stars or meteors, or atmospheric optical phenomena. This leaves two main causes of such reports, if we leave out the ETs. These are: atmospheric electrical phenomena, such as ball lightning and other electrical phenomena not often observed, so unrecognised by science, and; sightings of secret military aircraft on test flights.

Apart from the classic cases which are discussed, there is much interesting and original material, particularly concerning British sightings. Jenny manages to explain some of the British reports as natural phenomena, or false impressions caused by unusual formations of aircraft, such as fighter planes being refuelled at night, giving the impression of a giant triangle. However, the theory that many sightings are of secret aircraft, manned or remotely piloted, being developed by British Aerospace at Warton, Lancashire, based to a great extent on the work of Tim Matthews, is highly controversial

among British ufologists.

Jenny's work has confirmed the general impression that aircrews and air traffic controllers are reluctant to file official reports of strange aerial encounters. As she rightly points out, such an attitude is not beneficial to the cause of air safety.

This is definitely a book for the nuts-and-bolts ufologists to read and criticise, but it is not written to please the ETHers.

John Harney

Bruce Rux. *Hollywood Vs. the Aliens: The Motion Picture Industry's Participation in UFO Disinformation*, Frog, Ltd., Berkeley, California, 1997. £16.99.

Any readers who have enjoyed Martin Kottmeyer's articles in *Magonia* ([http://www.magonia.demon.co.uk / authors.html](http://www.magonia.demon.co.uk/authors.html)) on the influence of science fiction films on UFO close-encounter and abduction stories will appreciate this book. It is rather like a very long Kottmeyer article.

Rux takes the opposite view to that of Kottmeyer. He tells us that, instead of UFO stories aping SF films, the SF films imitate real UFO accounts as part of a government-inspired disinformation project. Although the blurb warns us that he is writing tongue-in-cheek, by mentioning his "mock-serious tone", some of his ideas are interesting.

For example, he asserts that films about alien invasion were either serious or ridiculous, depending on the impression the government or the intelligence agencies wanted to create at the time. He points out that Ed Wood's notorious *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959) was so bad that it had to be deliberately bad, and his analysis of the film certainly seems convincing on that score.

Anyone who wishes to investigate the connection between SF films and the content of UFO reports will find this book a very useful reference manual.

John Harney

John Harney's reviews are taken from the October edition of *Magonia ETH Bulletin*.